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NH Sea Grant

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New Community Supported Fishery Initiatives Offer Fresh And Local Seafood

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September 3, 2009

DURHAM, N.H. –Each week, a growing number of people buy produce directly from growers through community supported agriculture, or CSAs. Now, Seacoast residents can support local fishermen and buy fresh, sustainable seafood through a new community supported fishery (CSF) initiative. The CSF, which will carry the New Hampshire Fresh and Local seafood brand recently established in Portsmouth, is a collaboration of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and N.H. Sea Grant, the N.H. Commercial Fisherman's Association, Yankee Fisherman's Cooperative, and local seafood groups, restaurants and fish markets.

Modeled after community supported agriculture, a CSF is a shore-side community of people collaborating with local fishermen to buy fish directly for a predetermined length of time. CSF shareholders give the fishermen financial support and then receive a weekly share of seafood caught during the season, says Ken La Valley, commercial fishing specialist for N.H. Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension.

The seafood received from a CSF will carry the N.H. Fresh and Local brand recently established in Portsmouth. Seafood products that carry the new red emblem were caught and processed in New Hampshire, thereby directly supporting the local economy and fishing industry. Brand products include locally harvested shrimp, lobster, haddock and a variety of other sustainable stock species.

The term 'local' seafood is considered having come from boats based in New Hampshire ports, those that land seafood in the state, or those within a 15-mile radius of the Seacoast border that are affiliated with the state's fishing community. Vendors sign an agreement that products marketed under the N.H. Fresh and Local brand have been delivered efficiently and directly to consumers, that the species marketed are those managed sustainably, and that there is confidence regarding their point of origin.

Developing CSFs using N.H. Fresh and Local seafood is a natural choice to fulfill consumer interest, La Valley said.

"A member of a CSF has the benefit of knowing exactly where their food came from and who their fisherman is," La Valley said. "By investing in fishermen, a shareholder helps to strengthen the local community."

Currently, Eastman's Fish is offering CSF shares with pick-up locations in Rye, Durham and Exeter. For more information, contact Carolyn Eastman at 603-760-7422 or carolyn@ckeconsulting.net. Coming this winter, the Yankee Fishermen's Co-op will be offering a northern shrimp CSF. At this time, they are looking to gauge interest and determine where the pick-up locations should be. Please visit www.nhseafood.com and complete the shrimp CSF interest form to receive more information.

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UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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